

## Unfinished Poems

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### SWEENEY AGONISTES

#### FRAGMENTS OF AN ARISTOPHANIC MELODRAMA

ORESTES: You don't see them, you don't—but *I* see them: they are hunting me down, I must move on.—*Choephoroi*.

Hence the soul cannot be possessed of the divine union, until it has divested itself of the love of created beings.—*St. John of the Cross*.

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### FRAGMENT OF A PROLOGUE

DUSTY. DORIS.

DUSTY: How about Pereira?

DORIS: What about Pereira?

I don't care.

DUSTY: You don't care!

Who pays the rent?

DORIS: Yes he pays the rent

DUSTY: Well some men don't and some men do

Some men don't and you know who

DORIS: You can have Pereira

DUSTY: What about Pereira?

DORIS: He's no gentleman, Pereira:

You can't trust him!

DUSTY: Well that's true.

He's no gentleman if you can't trust him

And if you can't trust him—

Then you never know what he's going to do.

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DORIS: No it wouldn't do to be too nice to Pereira.

DUSTY: Now Sam's a gentleman through and through.

DORIS: I like Sam

DUSTY: I like Sam

Yes and Sam's a nice boy too.

He's a funny fellow

DORIS: He is a funny fellow

He's like a fellow once I knew.

He could make you laugh.

DUSTY: Sam can make you laugh:

Sam's all right

DORIS: But Pereira won't do.

We can't have Pereira

DUSTY: Well what you going to do?

TELEPHONE: Ting a ling ling

Ting a ling ling

DUSTY: That's Pereira

DORIS: Yes that's Pereira

DUSTY: Well what you going to do?

TELEPHONE: Ting a ling ling

Ting a ling ling

DUSTY: That's Pereira

DORIS: Well can't you stop that horrible noise?

Pick up the receiver

DUSTY: What'll I say!

DORIS: Say what you like: say I'm ill,

Say I broke my leg on the stairs

Say we've had a fire

DUSTY: Hello Hello are you there?

Yes this is Miss Dorrance's flat—

Oh Mr. Pereira is that you? how do you do!

Oh I'm so sorry. I *am* so sorry

But Doris came home with a terrible chill

No, just a chill

Oh I *think* it's only a chill

Yes indeed I hope so too

WAUCHOPE: Hello dear  
How many's up there?  
DUSTY: Nobody's up here  
How many's down there?  
WAUCHOPE: Four of us here.  
Wait till I put the car round the corner  
We'll be right up

DUSTY: All right, come up.

DUSTY [to DORIS]: Cards are queer.

DORIS: I'd like to know about that coffin.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK

KNOCK

KNOCK

DORIS. DUSTY. WAUCHOPE. HORSFALL. KLIPSTEIN. KRUMPACKER.

WAUCHOPE: Hello Doris! Hello Dusty! How do you do!

How come? how come? will you permit me—

I think you girls both know Captain Horsfall—

We want you to meet two friends of ours,

American gentlemen here on business.

Meet Mr. Klipstein. Meet Mr. Krumpacker.

KLIPSTEIN: How do you do

KRUMPACKER: How do you do

KLIPSTEIN: I'm very pleased to make your acquaintance

KRUMPACKER: Extremely pleased to become acquainted

KLIPSTEIN: Sam—I should say Loot Sam Wauchope

KRUMPACKER: Of the Canadian Expeditionary Force—

KLIPSTEIN: The Loot has told us a lot about you.

KRUMPACKER: We were all in the war together

Klip and me and the Cap and Sam.

KLIPSTEIN: Yes we did our bit, as you folks say,

I'll tell the world we got the Hun on the run

KRUMPACKER: What about that poker game? eh what Sam?

What about that poker game in Bordeaux?

Yes Miss Dorrance you get Sam

To tell about that poker game in Bordeaux.

DUSTY: Do you know London well, Mr. Krumpacker?

KLIPSTEIN: No we never been here before

KRUMPACKER: We hit this town last night for the first time

KLIPSTEIN: And I certainly hope it won't be the last time.

DORIS: You like London, Mr. Klipstein?

KRUMPACKER: Do we like London? do we like London!

Do we like London!! Eh what Klip?

KLIPSTEIN: Say, Miss—er—uh—London's swell.

We like London fine.

KRUMPACKER: Perfectly slick.

DUSTY: Why don't you come and live here then?

KLIPSTEIN: Well, no, Miss—er—you haven't quite got it

(I'm afraid I didn't quite catch your name—

But I'm very pleased to meet you all the same) —

London's a little too gay for us

Yes I'll say a little too gay.

KRUMPACKER: Yes London's a little too gay for us

Don't think I mean anything *coarse*—

But I'm afraid we couldn't stand the pace.

What about it Klip?

KLIPSTEIN: You said it, Krum.

London's a slick place, London's a swell place,

London's a fine place to come on a visit—

KRUMPACKER: Specially when you got a real live Britisher

A guy like Sam to show you around.

Sam of course is at *home* in London,

And he's promised to show us around.

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## FRAGMENT OF AN AGON

SWEENEY. WAUCHOPE. HORSFALL. KLIPSTEIN. KRUMPACKER.

SWARTS. SNOW. DORIS. DUSTY.

SWEENEY: I'll carry you off

To a cannibal isle.

DORIS: You'll be the cannibal!

SWEENEY: You'll be the missionary!

You'll be my little seven stone missionary!

I'll gobble you up. I'll be the cannibal.

DORIS: You'll carry me off? To a cannibal isle?

SWEENEY: I'll be the cannibal.

DORIS: I'll be the missionary.

I'll convert you!

SWEENEY: I'll convert you!

Into a stew.

A nice little, white little, missionary stew.

DORIS: You wouldn't eat me!

SWEENEY: Yes I'd eat you!

In a nice little, white little, soft little, tender little,

Juicy little, right little, missionary stew.

You see this egg

You see this egg

Well that's life on a crocodile isle.

There's no telephones

There's no gramophones

There's no motor cars

No two-seaters, no six-seaters,

No Citroën, no Rolls-Royce.

Nothing to eat but the fruit as it grows.

Nothing to see but the palmtrees one way

And the sea the other way,

Nothing to hear but the sound of the surf.

Nothing at all but three things

DORIS: What things?

SWEENEY: Birth, and copulation, and death.

That's all, that's all, that's all, that's all,

Birth, and copulation, and death.

DORIS: I'd be bored.

SWEENEY: You'd be bored.

Birth, and copulation, and death.

DORIS: I'd be bored.

SWEENEY: You'd be bored.

Birth, and copulation, and death.

That's all the facts when you come to brass tacks:

Birth, and copulation, and death.

I've been born, and once is enough.

You don't remember, but I remember,

Once is enough.

SONG BY WAUCHOPE AND HORSFALL  
SWARTS AS TAMBO. SNOW AS BONES

*Under the bamboo*

*Bamboo bamboo*

*Under the bamboo tree*

*Two live as one*

*One live as two*

*Two live as three*

*Under the bam*

*Under the boo*

*Under the bamboo tree.*

*Where the breadfruit fall*

*And the penguin call*

*And the sound is the sound of the sea*

*Under the bam*

*Under the boo*

*Under the bamboo tree.*

*Where the Gauguin maids*

*In the banyan shades*

*Wear palmleaf drahery*

*Under the bam*

*Under the boo*

*Under the bamboo tree.*

*Tell me in what part of the wood*

*Do you want to flirt with me?*

*Under the breadfruit, banyan, palmleaf*

*Or under the bamboo tree?*

*Any old tree will do for me*

*Any old wood is just as good*

Any old isle is just my style  
Any fresh egg  
Any fresh egg  
And the sound of the coral sea.

DORIS: I dont like eggs; I never liked eggs; .  
And I dont like life on your crocodile isle.

SONG BY KLIPSTEIN AND KRUMPACKER

SNOW AND SWARTS AS BEFORE

My little island girl  
My little island girl  
I'm going to stay with you  
And we wont worry what to do  
We wont have to catch any trains  
And we wont go home when it rains  
We'll gather hibiscus flowers  
For it wont be minutes but hours  
For it wont be hours but years

*diminuendo* { And the morning  
And the evening  
And noontime  
And night  
Morning  
Evening  
Noontime  
Night

DORIS: That's not life, that's no life  
Why I'd just as soon be dead.

SWEENEY: That's what life is. Just is

DORIS: What is?

What's that life is?

SWEENEY: Life is death.

I knew a man once did a girl in—

DORIS: Oh Mr. Sweeney, please dont talk,

I cut the cards before you came  
And I drew the coffin

SWARTS: You drew the coffin?

DORIS: I drew the COFFIN very last card.

I dont care for such conversation

A woman runs a terrible risk.

SNOW: Let Mr. Sweeney continue his story.

I assure you, Sir, we are very interested.

SWEENEY: I knew a man once did a girl in

Any man might do a girl in

Any man has to, needs to, wants to

Once in a lifetime, do a girl in.

Well he kept her there in a bath

With a gallon of lysol in a bath

SWARTS: These fellows always get pinched in the end.

SNOW: Excuse me, they dont all get pinched in the end.

What about them bones on Epsom Heath?

I seen that in the papers

You seen it in the papers

They *dont* all get pinched in the end.

DORIS: A woman runs a terrible risk.

SNOW: Let Mr. Sweeney continue his story.

SWEENEY: This one didn't get pinched in the end

But that's another story too.

This went on for a couple of months

Nobody came

And nobody went

But he took in the milk and he paid the rent.

SWARTS: What did he do?

All that time, what did he do?

SWEENEY: What did he do! what did he do?

That dont apply.

Talk to live men about what they do.

He used to come and see me sometimes

I'd give him a drink and cheer him up.

DORIS: Cheer him up?

DUSTY: Cheer him up?

SWEENEY: Well here again that dont apply

But I've gotta use words when I talk to you.

But here's what I was going to say.

He didn't know if he was alive  
                                     and the girl was dead  
 He didn't know if the girl was alive  
                                     and he was dead  
 He didn't know if they both were alive  
                                     or both were dead  
 If he was alive then the milkman wasn't  
                                     and the rent-collector wasn't  
 And if they were alive then he was dead.  
 There wasn't any joint  
 There wasn't any joint  
 For when you're alone  
 When you're alone like he was alone  
 You're either or neither  
 I tell you again it dont apply  
 Death or life or life or death  
 Death is life and life is death  
 I gotta use words when I talk to you  
 But if you understand or if you dont  
 That's nothing to me and nothing to you  
 We all gotta do what we gotta do  
 We're gona sit here and drink this booze  
 We're gona sit here and have a tune  
 We're gona stay and we're gona go  
 And somebody's gotta pay the rent  
 DORIS:                               I know who  
 SWEENEY: But that's nothing to me and nothing to you.

FULL CHORUS: WAUCHOPE, HORSFALL, KLIPSTEIN, KRUMPACKER

When you're alone in the middle of the night and you wake  
     in a sweat and a hell of a fright  
 When you're alone in the middle of the bed and you wake  
     like someone hit you on the head  
 You've had a cream of nightmare dream and you've got the  
     hoo-ha's coming to you  
 Hoo hoo hoo  
 You dreamt you waked up at seven o'clock and it's foggy and

                    it's damp and it's dawn and it's dark  
 And you wait for a knock and the turning of a lock for you  
     , know the hangman's waiting for you.  
 And perhaps you're alive  
 And perhaps you're dead  
 Hoo ha ha  
 Hoo ha ha  
 Hoo  
 Hoo  
 Hoo  
 KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK  
 KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK  
 KNOCK  
 KNOCK  
 KNOCK

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## CORIOLAN

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### I. TRIUMPHAL MARCH

Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves, horses' heels  
 Over the paving.  
 And the flags. And the trumpets. And so many eagles.  
 How many? Count them. And such a press of people.  
 We hardly knew ourselves that day, or knew the City.  
 This is the way to the temple, and we so many crowding the way.  
 So many waiting, how many waiting? what did it matter, on such  
     a day?  
 Are they coming? No, not yet. You can see some eagles. And hear  
     the trumpets.  
 Here they come. Is he coming?  
 The natural wakeful life of our Ego is a perceiving.  
 We can wait with our stools and our sausages.  
 What comes first? Can you see? Tell us. It is

5,800,000 rifles and carbines,  
 102,000 machine guns,  
 28,000 trench mortars,  
 53,000 field and heavy guns,  
 I cannot tell how many projectiles, mines and fuses,  
 13,000 aeroplanes,  
 24,000 aeroplane engines,  
 50,000 ammunition waggons,  
 now 55,000 army waggons,  
 11,000 field kitchens,  
 1,150 field bakeries.

What a time that took. Will it be he now? No,  
 Those are the golf club Captains, these the Scouts,  
 And now the *société gymnastique de Poissy*  
 And now come the Mayor and the Liverymen. Look  
 There he is now, look:  
 There is no interrogation in his eyes  
 Or in the hands, quiet over the horse's neck,  
 And the eyes watchful, waiting, perceiving, indifferent.  
 O hidden under the dove's wing, hidden in the turtle's breast,  
 Under the palmtree at noon, under the running water  
 At the still point of the turning world. O hidden.

Now they go up to the temple. Then the sacrifice.  
 Now come the virgins bearing urns, urns containing  
 Dust  
 Dust  
 Dust of dust, and now  
 Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone. oakleaves, horses' heels  
 Over the paving.

That is all we could see. But how many eagles! and how many  
 trumpets!  
 (And Easter Day, we didn't get to the country,  
 So we took young Cyril to church. And they rang a bell

And he said right out loud, *crumpets.*)  
 Don't throw away that sausage,  
 It'll come in handy. He's artful. Please, will you  
 Give us a light?  
 Light  
 Light  
*Et les soldats faisaient la haie? ILS LA FAISAIENT.*

## II. DIFFICULTIES OF A STATESMAN

Cry what shall I cry?  
 All flesh is grass: comprehending  
 The Companions of the Bath, the Knights of the British Empire,  
 the Cavaliers,  
 O Cavaliers! of the Legion of Honour,  
 The Order of the Black Eagle (1st and 2nd class),  
 And the Order of the Rising Sun.  
 Cry cry what shall I cry?  
 The first thing to do is to form the committees:  
 The consultative councils, the standing committees, select commit-  
 tees and sub-committees.  
 One secretary will do for several committees.  
 What shall I cry?  
 Arthur Edward Cyril Parker is appointed telephone operator  
 At a salary of one pound ten a week rising by annual increments  
 of five shillings  
 To two pounds ten a week; with a bonus of thirty shillings at Christ-  
 mas  
 And one week's leave a year.  
 A committee has been appointed to nominate a commission of en-  
 gineers  
 To consider the Water Supply.  
 A commission is appointed  
 For Public Works, chiefly the question of rebuilding the fortifica-  
 tions.

A commission is appointed  
To confer with a Volscian commission  
About perpetual peace: the fletchers and javelin-makers and smiths  
Have appointed a joint committee to protest against the reduction  
of orders.

Meanwhile the guards shake dice on the marches  
And the frogs (O Mantuan) croak in the marshes.  
Fireflies flare against the faint sheet lightning  
What shall I cry?

Mother mother

Here is the row of family portraits, dingy busts, all looking remark-  
ably Roman,

Remarkably like each other, lit up successively by the flare  
Of a sweaty torchbearer, yawning.

O hidden under the . . . Hidden under the . . .

Where the dove's foot rested and locked for a moment,

A still moment, repose of noon, set under the upper branches of  
noon's widest tree

Under the breast feather stirred by the small wind after noon  
There the cyclamen spreads its wings, there the clematis droops over  
the lintel

O mother (not among these busts, all correctly inscribed)

I a tired head among these heads

Necks strong to bear them

Noses strong to break the wind

Mother

May we not be some time, almost now together,

If the mactations, immolations, oblat. ampetrations,

Are now observed

May we not be

O hidden

Hidden in the stillness of noon, in the silent croaking night.

Come with the sweep of the little bat's wing, with the small flare of  
the firefly or lightning bug,

"Rising and falling, crowned with dust," the small creatures,

The small creatures chirp thinly through the dust, through the night.

O mother

What shall I cry?

We demand a committee, a representative committee, a committee of  
investigation

RESIGN RESIGN RESIGN

not possible

BURBANK WITH A BAEDEKER:  
BLEISTEIN WITH A CIGAR

to hold together

*Tra-la-la-la-la-la-laire—nil nisi divinum stabile est; caetera fumus—the gondola stopped, the old palace was there, how charming its grey and pink—goats and monkeys, with such hair too!—so the countess passed on until she came through the little park, where Niobe presented her with a cabinet, and so departed.*

Burbank crossed a little bridge  
Descending at a small hotel;  
Princess Volupine arrived,  
They were together, and he fell.

loss of  
ambition -  
sleazy  
little man



Defunctive music under sea

Passed seaward with the passing bell

Slowly: the God Hercules

Had left him, that had loved him well.

The horses, under the axletree

Beat up the dawn from Istria

With even feet. Her shuttered barge

Burned on the water all the day.

But this or such was Bleistein's way:

A saggy bending of the knees

And elbows, with the palms turned out,

Chicago Semite Viennese.

A lustreless protrusive eye

Stares from the protozoic slime

At a perspective of Canaletto.

The smoky candle end of time

Declines. On the Rialto once.

The rats are underneath the piles.

The jew is underneath the lot.

Money in furs. The boatman smiles,

Princess Volupine extends

A meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic hand

To climb the waterstair. Lights, lights,

She entertains Sir Ferdinand

Klein. Who clipped the lion's wings

And flea'd his rump and pared his claws?

Thought Burbank, meditating on

Time's ruins, and the seven laws.

possible  
negation  
Greek  
west

slime  
man -  
decline of  
civilization  
degenerate  
I move to  
was'nt

red  
w/  
myth